

TRAINING Disciples to Train

Session 5: What is Discipleship? (2d)

Offered by Ron Lively, M.Div., M.A. – BiblicalMentoring.org (Studies)

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Each person quotes the memory verse: VERSE: **2 Timothy 2:2**

1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Step 3: *Read and discuss all or part of the Bible Chapter - 2 Timothy 2*

Step 4: Questions for Personal Applications and/or Group Discussions:

1. The author writes that irresponsible evangelism causes spiritual neglect. Do you see how this causes weak, superficial believers?
2. What does Phillips mean when he writes that "discipleship is inseparable from responsible parenthood"?
3. When is a disciple-maker's work finished?
4. Why is 2 Timothy 2:2 important to the success of disciple making?
5. Why is the Christ's Command / Man's Response diagram the best illustration of the author's key message?

Step 5: *Read and discuss the Content from the book:*

Chapter 2d per the author – Keith Phillips:

Quality Reproduction Is Ensured

If I were only involved in evangelism and responsible for over 11,000 new Christians, it would take me from September to December each year just to address a Christmas card to each of them. I would be so busy leading people to Christ that it would be impossible to care for them and help them grow. I would need a computer merely to recall their names. Such irresponsible evangelism would cause spiritual child neglect, and result in weak, superficial believers.

I used to brag about my evangelistic prowess—how I met a man on an airplane, talked with him for fifty minutes, led him to Christ, yet never knew his last name. Somehow, I believed exploits like that heightened my spiritual virility—until I realized I had deserted most of these "victims" after our brief encounters. I had experienced the excitement of conception and the joy of birth without assuming the responsibility of parenthood.

Let me illustrate the gravity of this failure.

In June of 1976, my wife, Katie, and I were blessed by the birth of twin boys, Joshua and Paul. Believe me, they demanded round-the-clock attention. We fed them, rocked them, changed their diapers and did everything good parents do.

Suppose that when the boys were three months old, Katie and I decided we needed a break (which we did). So we propped Joshua and Paul up against the couch to talk with them.

I told them we were exhausted and were going on a two- week vacation —alone. However, I quickly assured them they had nothing to worry about. "You've watched everything we have done, so you should know how to take care of yourselves by now. But in case you forget something, we've typed out detailed instructions for you to follow: how to make your formula, how to feed yourselves, how to change your diapers, what the symptoms are. We've taped these instructions to the refrigerator and left our itinerary so you can phone us if you have any questions. Don't worry about a thing."

Had Katie and I actually done that to our three-month- old boys, we would have been thrown in jail for child neglect. Infants can't feed or care for themselves; they must be watched day and night until they are old enough to survive on their own.

Discipleship is inseparable from responsible parenthood. A spiritual parent, like a physical parent, is accountable to God for the care and nurture of his children. Paul knew he was the spiritual father of the Corinthians: "...for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 Corinthians 4:15). He called the Galatians "my children" (Galatians 4:19) and Timothy "my true child in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2). He pleaded on behalf of Onesimus, "my child, whom I have begotten" (Philemon 10).

The disciple-maker knows that his responsibility continues until his disciple becomes a spiritually mature, reproducing believer. He invests a great amount of time in his disciple and gives undivided attention to his needs. Discipleship is quality reproduction that ensures that the process of spiritual multiplication will continue from generation to generation.

God's Spirit instituted a safeguard to monitor the quality of spiritual offspring. Paul indicates that the disciple-maker's relationship with his disciple extends through four generations. "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Here, Paul (first generation) instructs his spiritual son, Timothy (second generation), to teach the things that Paul taught him to faithful men (third generation), who in turn would teach others (fourth generation).

Paul's reference to four generations is no coincidence. A disciple-maker only knows how effectively he has taught his student when he sees his disciple's student teaching others.

In 1972 God called Al Ewert to direct our work in the Wichita ghetto. I disciplined him. I spent hours and hours with Al over many months, instilling in him everything I knew about being God's man. We searched for biblical principles together and applied them to our lives. Before long Al began to disciple Don, who has since disciplined Maurice.

In light of discipleship's mandate to train others to teach others, I (first generation) can only evaluate my effectiveness with Al (second generation) by watching how Don (third generation) is doing with Maurice (fourth generation). If Al fully grasps discipleship (self-death and reproduction), then Don will be well equipped to train Maurice how to train others to teach others. Maurice is the real proof of the pudding.

	Four Generations			
Generation	1	2	3	4
	Paul	Timothy	Faithful Men	Others
	Keith	Al	Don	Maurice

It is a human tendency to opt for mass production rather than quality workmanship. How often have you heard, "They just don't make things like they used to"? And how frequent the reply, "It's just not cost-effective"?

Only a master craftsman demands quality above all else. His reputation is at stake with every item produced because he places his name on his work. Jesus is the master disciple-maker. Since every believer bears His name, there is no room in discipleship for mediocrity.

Two thousand years ago Jesus addressed a great multitude of followers with uncompromising candor. He declared, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Jesus narrowed every listener's options to two. If man's response is unbelief, he disobeys and dies. He is Christ's enemy (see Matthew 12:30). If he responds in faith,

he obeys and becomes a disciple, dies to himself and reproduces. Christ is the Lord of his life. Jesus speaks of no other alternative.

Christ's Command		Man's Response		
				Self-Death
	Faith →	Obedience →	Discipleship →	
Follow Me →	or			Reproduction
	Unbelief →	Disobedience →	Death	

Christ knew that this would be the most momentous decision any person could make, so He warned them to count the cost (Luke 14:28). And as incomprehensible as it seems, many withdrew "...and walked no more with him" (John 6:66 KJV).

Christ's life-changing command, "Follow Me," is as all-encompassing today as it was on the Galilean coast. It cannot be taken lightly. Your eternal destiny hinges on your response.

You either retain your rights, possessions and your life as it is now, or you give up everything you have to the Lordship of Christ in exchange for eternal life and peace with God. Nothing would please Christ more than if, like Levi, you "...left everything, sprang up and went with him" (Luke 5:28 LB).

Christ's call still echoes through the centuries: "COME DIE WITH ME!" Our salvation is caused by and grounded in the grace of God. God's grace is the source. Our faith is the instrument. But our obedience is both the mandatory human response and the undeniable evidence of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10). It is the proof of our faith. That is why James says "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17).

(pp.24b-29)

Disciple's Checklist – What is Discipleship?
___ I have died to myself.
___ I am reproducing in others the fullness of life I have in Christ.

Step 6: End by sharing personal prayer requests and each person praying for the other person's requests.

Source: The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Keith Phillips. Pub. by Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981. ISBN 0-8007-1181-5. Introduction by Robert E. Coleman. Content (except study questions) is taken from the book without revisions.

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